

Mountain Dulcimer Workshops

Beginning to Intermediate Level

- **Music Theory for Dummies:** a little theory is often as useful as a lot of technique in terms of improving your playing, particularly in jamming situations. This workshop is designed to demystify what every dulcimer or autoharp player should know about chords, modes, keys, and other frightening but important subjects. Time permitting; we'll also discuss jamming techniques and etiquette. (Neal).
- **Exploring the 1-3-5 Tuning for Dulcimer:** this tuning is particularly good for ragtime, blues, and other guitar-like tunes. We'll learn some simple tunes like "Victory Rag", "Railroad Bill" and "John Henry" that benefit nicely from this tuning. (Neal or Heidi).
- **Easy Chords In D-A-D:** let's start off at the very beginning with easy chords. We'll try a few easy strum patterns and then add some additional fingerings. We'll move right into some simple songs to sing that will be accompanied by our chord playing. (Heidi or Neal).
- **Simple Harmony in D-A-D:** we'll take some familiar tunes and find alto, tenor and bass "harmony" lines to add to the melody for an ensemble sound. Starting with "Bile the Cabbages", we'll move on to "Go Tell Aunt Rhody", "Sweet Hour of Prayer", and "Big Eyed Rabbit". (Heidi or Neal).
- **D-A-A Chords:** a clear chord chart will be provided and participants will go through the exercise of penciling in fingerings next to the chord names. Songs to be used for the exercise are: "Hard Times", "Banks of the Ohio", "Jubilee", "Down the Road", "Going to Little Creek" and several more. (Heidi or Neal)
- **Easy Children's Songs in D-A-D:** sometimes it's the early childhood songs that allow our fingers to quickly get familiar with the fret board. Examples of these include "London Bridge", "Michael Row Your Boat Ashore", and "Brahm's Lullaby". (Heidi or Neal)
- **Easy Rounds in D-A-D:** one of the quickest ways to play harmony with your dulcimer buddies is to learn a couple of rounds. Everyone learns the melody together and then splits off into groups. Songs include "Chairs to Mend", "Dona Nobis Pacem", "Three Blind Mice" and more. (Heidi)
- **Learn a Tune by Ear:** a good exercise in listening and training your fingers to imitate what you hear. We'll take a basic tune and break it down phrase by phrase: slowly: and then put all the pieces together for a new tune to add to your repertoire: without tab... gasp! (Neal or Heidi).
- **Left Hand Techniques:** every intermediate player should be familiar with left hand techniques such as hammer-ons, slides, pull-offs, and triplets. We'll break each of these techniques down and practice applying them in appropriate tunes. (Neal or Heidi).
- **Right Hand Techniques:** there's more to your right hand than bum-ditty-bum. Learn a variety of strumming techniques to add variety to your music and allow you to "match the mood" of the material you're trying to play. (Neal or Heidi).
- **Fills, Breaks, and Turnarounds:** learn what to do to fill those spaces when simply strumming the chord sounds too boring; learn to use turnarounds: that's what you do between the end of one part of the song and the beginning of the next: and get started taking instrumental breaks to spice up your playing. (Neal or Heidi).
- **Repertoire Development:** just want to learn a few new tunes? Try one of these workshops. (Neal or Heidi).
 - Easy Contra Dance Tunes
 - Songs about Mountains
 - Gospel Technology
 - Slow Airs
 - Winter Songs
 - Songs about Birds
 - Cowboy Songs
 - Songs about Exotic Places
 - Mother's Day Songs
 - Gardening Songs
 - Songs about Ordinary People
 - Easy Old Time Fiddle Tunes
 - Favorite Gospel Songs
 - Easy Country Blues Songs
 - Harvest and Thanksgiving Songs
 - Pub Favorites
 - Children's Songs
 - Doofus/Bozo Songs
 - Father's Day Songs
 - Songs about Food
 - Nostalgic Songs
 - Railroad Songs

- Songs about Water
- Songs of the Supernatural
- Your State's Name Here

- Silly Songs
- Tear Jerkers and Dying Downers

Intermediate to Advanced Level

- **Out of the Ordinary Waltzes:** waltzes are wonderful on the dulcimer. We have a large number of obscure, beautiful and, often, unusual waltzes that we've arranged for dulcimer over the years. We'll bring along several of our favorites, arranged in D-A-D. (This could easily be coordinated with a similar autoharp workshop). (Neal or Heidi).
- **Fiddle Tunes You Probably Can't Dance To:** the Southern solo fiddle tradition contains a number of tunes that were not designed for dancing. Many have unusual twists and turns, often adding or subtracting beats. Even those that may have been intended as dance tunes sound good on the dulcimer, particularly at a stately tempo. (Neal or Heidi).
- **Love, Death and Barnyard Animals:** some of our favorite country blues tunes: like Deep River Blues, Deep Elm (pronounced Ellum) Blues, and maybe even Deep Doo Doo (that's a joke!) – come from the guitar playing of people like Doc Watson and Libba Cotton. These tunes sound wonderful on the dulcimer and are great "repertoire expanders." (Neal or Heidi).
- **Scottish Tunes in DAD:** learn a couple beautiful melodies that lie nicely on the dulcimer. Selections include "Loch Tay Boat Song", "Rorate", "Ian Ruddah's Lament", and "Cuillins of Home". (Heidi or Neal)
- **Ragged Tunes:** the left hand fingering and syncopated rhythms make these tunes fun to play on the dulcimer. "Pig Ankle Rag" is in D-A-D and "Red Apple Rag" is in D-A-D capo 3. (Heidi or Neal)
- **Adapting Guitar or Other Written Music to the Dulcimer:** there is a lot of music available in books for guitar and other folk instruments. Learn how you can easily adapt this music to the dulcimer. (Neal).
- **Putting Your Music on Paper:** an informational discussion of music notation programs, tablature, and other computer resources for those who "want to but don't know how." (Neal or Heidi).
- **Practical Music Theory:** a more advanced version of the Music Theory for Dummies workshop. This one covers the beginning topics, i.e. chords, modes, keys, etc., but goes into more depth to include transposing, chord inversions, the use of capos, and more. This should be scheduled for two hours or more. (Neal).
- **Repertoire Development:** the repertoire development workshops outlined under the Beginning to Novice levels can be presented at a more advanced level as well. (Neal or Heidi).

Note: most of our workshops can be tailored for any level from beginner to advanced but in the absence of any prior arrangement to the contrary, will generally be targeted at the levels indicated.